

Middletown School Readiness Council
Wednesday, September 21, 2016
Wesley School
10 Wesleyan Hills Rd.
Middletown, CT 06457

Members Present: Betsy Morgan, Alice Torres, Dawn Dubay, Sheila Daniels, Monica Belyea, Amy Waterman, Donna Marino, Ed Bonilla, Jerome Long, Christine O'Grady, Izzi Greenberg, Lina Kronenberger, Jennifer Cannata Ann Perzan and Marla Hinz. Also Present: Michelle Peterson.

I. Welcome, Call to Order & Announcements: Alice Torres opened the meeting at 12:40P.M. welcoming everyone to our new space at Wesley School and welcoming the new School Readiness Facilitator, Dawn Dubay. Introductions followed with a special introduction from Dawn.

Announcements: Michelle Peterson noted she will be representing DCF as Susan Sienkiewicz has taken on a new role at DCF. Michelle is familiar with School Readiness and has participated in Case Consultations. The Council welcomes Michelle and thanks Susan for her past involvement. Ed Bonilla noted United Way campaign is underway and reminded this present that contributions can be earmarked for education, housing, income and health. Ed also announced this year he will be roasting United Way President, Kevin Wilhelm, on October 13th. Marla Hinz noted CRT's Head Start program is underway for this year. Amy Waterman announced she has hired a new site coordinator, Melinda Moore, for Macdonough's FRC. Snow School Principal Jen Cannata noted a social worker has been hired to serve the Snow Preschool program and thanked Central Office and the Board of Education for that needed position. Donna Marino circulated PEP brochures and noted Rebecca Deotte, former Parent Leadership student and leader, has been hired as the library/media specialists here at Wesley School. Christine O'Grady shared handouts on Child First data with the Council. This is the last year of the program's two-year grant and she is hoping for future funding. Lina Kronenberger noted Even Start is currently full and has children on their waiting list. Izzi Greenberg noted Liz Fraser has difficulty attending our monthly meetings now that she is in Hartford at CAHS. She will come when she can and wants the Council to know she will make herself available to us when the need arises. Izzi also noted, on behalf of Kitty Robinson from Russell Library, that she was unable to make today's meeting. Izzi announced the Middlesex Coalition for Children will be sponsoring a candidate forum at the October 13th monthly meeting of the Coalition. Jerome Long noted he continues to read to preschoolers at the YMCA program. He also noted people of color and poverty are victims of the "mess" society is currently in and he sees the School Readiness Council as the "go between" among those people and the "mess". Monica Belyea, Opportunity Knocks facilitator, reminded the Council of the upcoming "Kick-Off" meeting on a Tuesday, September 27th. Alice Torres announced her goal of retiring in June. She noted EHS is fully enrolled. She shared news that United Way awarded ACES funding to support a train the trainer program to support dual language learners throughout Middlesex County. Anyone interested may contact Alice for additional information.

II. Acceptance of the June 8, 2016 School Readiness Council meeting minutes: Donna Marino moved to accept the minutes from the above mentioned date. Lina Kronenberger seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

III. Financial Report: Dawn distributed the financial report, noting all slots are filled and programs have waiting lists. Programs had a total of eight non-residents in July and eleven in August. Dawn discussed non-resident spaces with providers at their recent meeting and Bright & Early requested one additional non-resident slot. Since South Farms is not using any non-resident spaces, providers and Dawn decided to bring the issue to the Council. Izzi noted we may want to review this policy to see if it is working the way we intended it to and suggested we check out of town placements in other School Readiness communities. Izzi moved to approve the request for an addition non-resident slot at Bright & Early. Christine O'Grady seconded the motion. Discussion followed. Christine noted we might have to revisit this as times goes on. Ann also reminded the Council about

taking care of homeless students when the need arises. Jen noted concern around slot usage and the possibility of shutting out our own city residents. The motion carried unanimously. Dawn will send out an e-mail to Council members that want to meet as a sub-committee to address this issue.

IV. Coordinator's Report: MECN Workshop: Dawn noted the first workshop is scheduled for next Tuesday, Sept. 27th at Wesley School from 5:30 to 8:00P.M. Mary Dineen Elovich will present on "Trauma, Attachment, and Brain Development". School Readiness Council Meeting Dates: Dawn circulated the meeting dates for the rest of the 2016 year including January. **Updates:** Some information was provided under "Announcements" above. These are additional and lengthier updates. CT Early Childhood Alliance Group: Izzi continues to serve as the chair of their Advocacy Committee. She noted Care4Kids continues to be a top priority for the committee. Other topics that will be addressed include; infant/toddler slot needs, funding streams, health development and behavioral health, including Birth – 3, lead poisoning awareness, prevention and treatment of, oral health, family poverty, and safety/emergency preparedness. Early Head Start: Alice reported EHS has applied for an expansion grant for a center based program that would serve up to 24 infants/toddlers in a school day/full year setting partnering with the YMCA. She also noted that EHS was awarded \$620,000. in facility improvement funds for the 300 Washington St. location. EHS, in collaboration with MPS, is exploring Smart Start Grant funding. This is a very exciting plan that would bridge community and public school preschool offerings, have a parent engagement/training component, and be housed at ACES Washington St. location. Anyone wanting to join Alice and Ann Perzan in a planning conversation may contact Alice or attend the upcoming meeting on Friday, Oct. 7th at 3:00P.M.

V. Coalition Report and Presentation: Izzi presented "Middletown's Children: A Reference Guide" to the Council. She noted this should serve the City and agencies that serve children and families as it states, as a reference guide. A brief discussion followed the presentation due only to lack of time. This booklet will be a valuable resource for many community agencies in their efforts to support children and families throughout Middletown. Please contact Izzi if you want or need additional copies of this booklet. A huge thank you to Izzi for the work put into this project.

VI. Adjournment: Monica Belyea moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:20P.M., Donna Marino seconded and the motion carried. Alice closed the meeting thanking those present for their attendance.

**The next Middletown School Readiness Council meeting will be held on
Wednesday, October 19th, 2016
at
Wesley School
10 Wesleyan Hills Road, Middletown, CT 06457
from
12:00 P.M. to 1:30 P.M.**

Respectfully Submitted by:
Sheila C. Daniels